

3.6 Porches and Entryways



building's entryway is indicative of the structure's architectural style and period. In Washington's historic district, there is an abundance of Victorian architecture and, in turn, ornate front porches with intricate balustrades and sawn brackets. It is important that these primary significant features be retained, preserved, and if necessary, reconstructed.



Porches and Entryway Guidelines

3.6.1 Entryways and porches are important character-defining elements of a historic structure and should be retained and preserved. Important elements include steps, columns, balustrades, doors, railings, brackets, roofs, cornices and entablatures.



3.6.2 If replacement of a porch element is necessary, replace only the deteriorated or missing detail with new materials that match the design of the original as closely as possible.

Entrances and porches are the focal point of an historic building. Porches were historically a center of activity in a residential structure. The design of a

3.6.3 Protect and maintain historic porches and entrances in appropriate ways:

- Periodically clean wooden surfaces, remove rust from metal, and keep a sound paint film on all painted porch surfaces.
- Ensure that water effectively runs off of floors and steps.
- Replace rotted floor boards or other porch materials

3.6.4 Reconstruction of missing or extensively deteriorated porches is encouraged. Reconstructed porches shall be based on documentary evidence. If adequate documentation is not available, a new design is appropriate if it is compatible with the style and period of the building.

3.6.5 It is prohibited to enclose porches on primary elevations. Porches on rear elevations not seen from the public right-of-way may be screened or enclosed only if the work is designed so that it can be installed or removed without damage to the historic structure.

3.6.6 Repairs to porches using materials incompatible with the original materials are not allowed. For example, metal supports shall not be used as substitutes for wood columns, plywood shall not be substituted for beaded board ceilings, and concrete shall

not be used as a substitute for tongue-and-groove wood flooring.

3.6.7 The installation of temporary features to aid the handicapped and disabled is recommended if the features are added to a non-character defining elevation of a structure and designed so that it can be installed or removed without damage to the historic structure.



Handicapped access can be accommodated in an appropriate manner.



3.6.8 Introducing new entrances on a primary elevation is prohibited.

3.7 Storefronts



The storefront is the most important character-defining element of a commercial façade both aesthetically and functionally. Historic, turn of the century storefronts in Washington had large display windows above wooden or masonry bulkheads with transom windows above. They also typically had recessed entryways in the center of the façade flanked by the display windows.



Storefront Guidelines

3.7.1 Retain and preserve commercial storefronts and storefront details that contribute to the historic character of the building including display windows, recessed entryways, doors, transoms, corner posts, columns, and other decorative features.

3.7.2 Retain and preserve historic materials including wood, stone, architectural metal, and cast iron.

3.7.3 Follow the guidelines outlined in the materials section in order to protect and maintain historic storefront materials such as wood, masonry, and architectural metals.

3.7.4 If replacement of a deteriorated storefront or storefront feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.

3.7.5 If reconstructing a historic storefront, base the design on historic research, physical evidence, and photographic documentation, if available. Recreate the original architectural elements including overall proportions, fenestration, dimensions, and orientation.

Reconstructed storefront based on original design



- 3.7.6** Altering the entrance, including its location, through a significant storefront is not permitted. Changing a storefront so that it appears as an office or residential use other than commercial shall not be allowed.



Reconstructing storefronts for new uses is not allowed.

- 3.7.7** Using materials which detract from the historic or architectural character of the building, such as mirrored glass, shall not be allowed.

its size, particularly on the west side of the historic district where several warehouses have been converted into residential uses.

The detailing on upper façades can be quite elaborate with variations in materials, brick corbelling, ornate cornices or parapet walls. There is also a wide variety of window types and configurations.



Upper façade detailing on DeMille Building

3.8 Upper Façades

Upper façades on a historic commercial building are quite different in their function, and therefore design. Commercial buildings were originally designed to have a commercial function on the first level, and an office or residential function on the upper floors. While not often used that way today, a growing trend in downtown revitalization is to bring a residential function back into a city's historic core. This practice is more prevalent in downtown Washington than most communities of

Upper Façade Guidelines

- 3.8.1** Retain and preserve historic façades and their architectural features such as brick corbelling, brick and stone string courses, quoins, stone and tile coping, cornices, and other façade elements.
- 3.8.2** Retain and preserve historic materials whenever possible including wood, stone, architectural metal, and cast iron.
- 3.8.3** It is prohibited to cover architectural details or entire façades with non-historic materials or treatments.

Whenever possible, remove metal cladding or other non-historic coverings from historic façades.



Inappropriate upper façade treatment

- 3.8.4** If replacement of an upper façade feature is necessary, replace the deteriorated element with a new element and design that matches the original in size, scale, design, proportion, detail, and material, if possible.
- 3.8.5** Using materials which detract from the historic or architectural character of the building, such as mirrored glass, shall not be allowed.
- 3.8.6** Original windows in upper façades shall not be covered up or bricked-in.



It is not appropriate to brick-in original window and door openings.

- 3.8.7** Original windows on upper floors that are located on rear or non-character-defining elevations may be repaired, or replaced with vinyl-clad windows that match the originals in design, size, proportions and detail.



3.9 Rear Elevations

Rear elevations on historic commercial buildings are of simple design reflecting their utilitarian function. These elevations, with rear entrances to shops, offices, and residential spaces, still foster a great deal of activity.

Rear Elevation Guidelines

- 3.9.1** Retain and preserve historic side and rear elevations and their architectural features.
- 3.9.2** Historic structures which are adjacent to rear parking areas or public rights-of-way are encouraged to utilize rear entrances allowing public and private access. If the rear entrance is public, awnings and other exterior features should be more subdued than those of the primary elevation.



Businesses are encouraged to have public rear entrances.

- 3.9.3** Whenever a rear elevation faces a public right of way or parking facilities, particularly on the waterfront, unnecessary utility lines and equipment shall be removed, whenever possible.

New utility and mechanical equipment shall be placed in inconspicuous locations such as the roof or screened from public view.

- 3.9.4** Residential features such as window boxes, window air conditioning units, etc, should be located on rear or side elevations and should be appropriate to the style of the historic structure. Small satellite dishes or television antennas should be as inconspicuous as possible, preferably being located on rooftops.



Residential features such as this fire escape should be located on rear elevations